

Governor's Health Care Listening Session  
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I am pleased you have decided to hold a health care listening session at a technical college. It is very appropriate in that Wisconsin's technical colleges are the leading provider of health care workers for the state of Wisconsin.

Chippewa Valley Technical College in particular provides 16 health care programs ranging from registered nursing to ultrasound, from medical laboratory to health information technology and that list goes on and on.

Obviously, my remarks today will focus on the health care worker shortage as that is near and dear to my heart. Did you know that there is a need in western Wisconsin for over 300 nurses annually for the next decade.

Health care is big business in the Chippewa Valley with this area being well established as a regional medical center for all of northwestern Wisconsin. When we talk about economic development in the Chippewa Valley health care is an important part of that.

I would like to make three points to you that will help the worker shortage in Wisconsin. First and foremost the State of Wisconsin has to take the lead role in stimulating innovation in health care education. We need to get young people interested in health care and into training at a younger age.

As we speak, we have a program operating across the street that allows 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders to begin their career in registered nursing and ultrasound. That is innovative---we've always said before that you had to be 18---why I don't know.

Yet programs like this cost money especially in the experimental stage like we are now in. Without a grant from the federal government I could not justify college resources to develop it. Even with the grant we are devoting precious human and financial resources to make it operational.

So yes, the State can help with resources to make faster transition a reality--- whether it is for a health academy or a human patient simulator like we have across the street.

Second, if we are going to solve the health care worker shortage we have to change the youth options program in this state to eliminate a burden for the K-12 system. Currently the WTCS charges tuition, books and fees back to the K-12 system instead of the legal amount which is the total cost of instruction for each student.

While this is not a burden for larger districts with more money behind each student, it is a concern for many of the 41 districts that we serve.

Third, the state of Wisconsin can work with accrediting bodies to allow more flexibility in the guidelines for various career areas—especially in rural areas. I view with pride our new medical assistant program which is a cross-trained individual who can perform basic laboratory procedures, administer meds, monitor vital signs and process medical records and insurance claims.

It is this type of multi-skilled individual that can keep medical costs down and bring quality health care to the rural areas. The state can take a leadership role with health care, accrediting and regulation bodies, and education to make this a reality.

Again, I thank you for your time, for holding a session in the Chippewa Valley and for helping to create a great health care system for the state of Wisconsin.